



Morocco

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - [2001](#)

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

March 4, 2002

The Constitution provides for a monarchy with a Parliament and an independent judiciary; however, ultimate authority rests with the King, Mohammed VI, who presides over the Council of Ministers, appoints or approves many members of the Government, and may, at his discretion, terminate the tenure of any minister, dissolve the Parliament, call for new elections, and rule by decree. Since the constitutional reform of 1996, the bicameral legislature consists of a lower house, the Chamber of Representatives, which is elected through universal suffrage, and an upper house, the Chamber of Counselors, whose members are elected by various regional, local, and professional councils (members of whom are elected directly). The lower house of Parliament also may dissolve the Government through a vote of no confidence. In March 1998, King Hassan named a coalition government headed by opposition socialist leader Abderrahmane Yousoufi and composed largely of ministers drawn from opposition parties. Prime Minister Yousoufi's Government is the first government drawn primarily from opposition parties in decades, and also represents the first opportunity for a coalition of socialist, left-of-center, and nationalist parties to be included in the Government. The November 1997 parliamentary elections were held amid widespread, credible reports of vote-buying by political parties and the Government, and excessive government interference. The fraud and government pressure tactics led most independent observers to conclude that the results of the election were heavily influenced, if not predetermined, by the Government. After a long appeals process, some of the results were overturned by the Constitutional Council in 2000, and new by-elections were held. In September 2000, the Government reported that various political parties had engaged in vote buying and fraud during indirect elections to replace one-third of the 270 seats in the Chamber of Counselors, Parliament's upper house. The judiciary is subject to government influence and some members of the judiciary accepted bribes; however, the Yousoufi Government continued to implement a reform program aimed at developing greater judicial independence and impartiality.

The security apparatus includes several overlapping police and paramilitary organizations. The Border Police and the National Security Police are departments of the Ministry of Interior; the Judicial Police falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice; and the Royal Gendarmerie reports to the Palace. Some members of the security forces continued to commit serious human rights abuses, although such abuses decreased somewhat during the year. While there were some well-publicized prosecutions for abuses by security forces, the failure to prosecute most other cases raised concerns regarding the Government's commitment to resolving the problem.

The country has a population of approximately 30,120,000. The economy is based on large phosphate reserves, a diverse agricultural sector, fisheries, a sizable tourist industry, a growing manufacturing sector (especially textiles), and a dynamic, deregulated telecommunications sector. Citizens working abroad are a source of considerable remittances. The illegal production and export of cannabis also is a significant economic activity, particularly in the north. Economic growth is highly dependent on agricultural output, which has been affected adversely by three consecutive years of worsening drought. According to the Government's statistics, the real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was \$1,181 in 2000, and the Government expected an increase of 6.1 percent in 2001.

The Government generally respected the rights of its citizens in most areas; however, the Government's record was generally poor in a few areas. Citizens do not have the full right to change their government. While then-King Hassan II's appointment of a first-ever opposition coalition government in 1998 marked a significant step toward democratization, officially recognized corruption and vote-buying in the September 2000 Chamber of Counselors elections constituted a notable setback. There is one report of a suspicious death in police custody, and a number of prisoners died while incarcerated. Despite progress by the Government, human rights groups continued to call for full disclosure of all available information concerning citizens abducted by

the Government from the 1960's through the 1980's. Some members of the security forces beat protesters on several occasions, although the extent of such abuses was more limited than in the past. Prison conditions remain harsh but continued slowly to improve. Authorities, at times, arbitrarily arrested and detained persons. The judiciary was subject to Interior Ministry influence and some members of the judiciary accepted bribes. Human rights organizations and activists continued to allege a lack of due process in high-profile court trials. Sixty-four member of the Islamist Justice and Charity Organization (JCO) and 36 human rights activists were sentenced to between 3 months and 1 year in prison plus fines, for their participation in protests held in December 2000 to celebrate the International Day of Human Rights. In July the Government quickly prosecuted on extremely questionable grounds a former intelligence agent who had made embarrassing assertions regarding the disappearance from Paris in 1965 of socialist leader Mehdi Ben Barka, a leading socialist and opposition figure. The Royal Arbitration Commission that the King established in 1999 to indemnify former political prisoners and their families continued to adjudicate cases and pay compensation.

At times authorities infringed on citizens' privacy rights. The Government's record on press freedom remained inconsistent during the year, although it improved over 2000. While the Government permitted extensive coverage of formerly taboo topics, it systematically restricted press freedom on several specific topics that it considered sensitive, and on which journalists continued to practice self-censorship, including criticism of the Monarchy, Morocco's claim to the Western Sahara, and the sanctity of Islam. The Government censored and banned several domestic and foreign publications during the year. The Government limited freedom of assembly and association. In several incidents throughout the year, police beat and violently dispersed demonstrators although police broke up fewer demonstrations than in the past. The Government limited freedom of religion. Although non-Muslim foreigners may practice their religions freely, missionaries who proselytized faced expulsion, and converts from Islam to other religions continued to experience social ostracism. The Government monitored the activities of mosques. The Government at times restricted freedom of movement and withheld the granting of passports for foreign travel. Human rights awareness training continued for teachers and police personnel. In April Amnesty International Secretary General Pierre Sané "applauded the progress recorded by Morocco in the field of human rights," although he urged more progress concerning political prisoners and past cases of disappearance.

Domestic violence and discrimination against women were common. Teenage prostitution was a problem in urban centers. Berbers faced cultural marginalization, and continued to press the Government to preserve their languages and culture. On October 17, the King established an institute to promote Berber culture. The Government violated worker rights, subjecting unions to government interference, restricting the right to strike and the right of workers to form unions, and using security forces to break up strikes. Child labor was a problem, and the Government did not act strongly enough to end the plight of young girls who were illegally employed and subjected to exploitative and abusive domestic servitude. Trafficking in persons, particularly child maids, was a problem.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were no reports of politically motivated killings.

On February 20 in Sale, a person died in custody as a result of police abuse. A policeman was tried on October 26 and convicted of torture resulting in death. He has appealed the conviction; the court has not yet handed down its sentence at year's end.

In January 2000, Ali Akzkane died while in police custody in Tiznit. The Inspector General of the National Security Police investigated the matter. The investigation determined that Akzkane had been suffering from depression and had committed suicide in his jail cell. The autopsy was not made public. The Government did not file any charges (see Section 1.c.).

In July 2000, a Royal Armed Forces patrol took Mustapha Najiaji and another person into custody. According to the other person, the patrol beat Najiaji at a Ministry of Interior holding cell. Najiaji later fell down, lost consciousness, and stopped breathing, at which time the security forces released the second person. The security forces reported Najiaji committed suicide by hanging himself. The second person later claimed Najiaji died from beatings by the security forces. The Moroccan Association of Human Rights (AMDH) reported that the autopsy indicated that Najiaji had been the victim of violence before his death, and expressed concern regarding the slow pace of the investigation. No charges were filed in the case during the year and the investigation was ongoing at year's end (see Section 1.c.).

Police authorities stopped Farah Mohammed near Oujda in 1999. Eyewitnesses reported he was beaten and kicked into unconsciousness. He later died in police custody. In August 1999, three police and security officers were arrested in the case. They were convicted of torturing Mohammed and sentenced to 12 years in prison.

After a lengthy delay, the trial of three policemen accused of manslaughter in the 1996 death of Hassan Mernissi resumed in September 2000. The prosecution maintained that Mernissi was beaten to death while in detention. The defendants maintain that Mernissi was drunk and knocked his head against the cell bars until he died. The autopsy indicated that he bled to death. After a 2-year investigation, the case finally went to trial in September 2000, was delayed until March, and was still pending at year's end.

Human rights groups maintained that poor medical care in prisons results in unnecessary deaths. The National Prison Administration continues to allow prison site visits by human rights groups, the press, and foreign diplomats (see Section 1.c.).

b. Disappearance

There were no new cases of confirmed disappearance for the sixth consecutive year. However, the AMDH claimed that the continued practice of incommunicado detention without informing family members of those detained was evidence of the continued practice of forced disappearance (see Section 1.d.).

The forced disappearance of individuals who opposed the Government and its policies occurred during several decades. The Youssoufi Government, upon taking office, pledged that such policies would not recur, and that it would disclose as much information as possible on past cases. Many of those who had disappeared were implicated in attempts to overthrow the Government in 1971 and 1972, or were Moroccans or Sahrawis (inhabitants of former Spanish Protectorate of Western Sahara) who challenged the Government's claim to the Western Sahara or other government policies. Many of those who disappeared were held in secret detention camps. The Government has provided information and death certificates regarding many of those who had disappeared over the years. However, hundreds of Moroccan and Sahrawi families do not have any information about their missing relatives, many of whom disappeared over 20 years ago. Authorities stated that they have released information on all confirmed disappearance cases.

After years of denying that Sahrawis were imprisoned in Morocco for Polisario-related military or political activity, the Government released more than 300 such prisoners in 1991. Entire families, and Sahrawis who had disappeared in the mid-1970's, were among those released. The Government has failed to conduct a public inquiry or to explain how and why those released spent up to 16 years of incommunicado detention without charge or trial. The former Sahrawi detainees have formed an informal association whose principal objective is to seek redress and compensation from the Government for their detention. A delegation of this association continued to meet with various government officials, human rights organizations, members of the press, and diplomatic representatives in both Rabat and in Laayoune during the year. They reported that little progress has been made in gaining the Government's recognition of their grievances.

Since October 1998, the Royal Consultative Council on Human Rights (CCDH) has been releasing information regarding cases of disappearance. However, human rights groups and families continue to claim hundreds more cases of disappearances than the Government, which lists only 112. Many disputed disappearances are from the Western Sahara. On April 13, the King issued a decree expanding the CCDH's mandate to allow it to investigate cases on its own initiative. The decree also directed the CCDH to submit its own annual report on the human rights situation in Morocco, and created an annual human rights prize. The decree enhanced autonomy by changing the composition of the council to decrease the number of slots for political parties and unions from 18 to 9, and increase the number for economic, social and cultural associations; however, the King nominates all persons on the Council. In addition decision making was changed from requiring a unanimous vote to a two-thirds majority. The decree also changed the status of ministerial delegates from voting to advisory members. Thus, the influence of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice is significantly reduced. Moroccan human rights organizations favored these changes and helped argue for them, although some groups do not feel the changes went far enough.

The CCDH also is responsible for assisting the Arbitration Commission in providing compensation to victims of past human rights abuses, or their surviving family members. In July 2000, the Government, through the Arbitration Commission of the CCDH, began distributing preliminary compensation payments to Sahrawis who had disappeared or been detained in the past, and their family members. The Government announced that it intended such initial payments to be provisional funds for Sahrawis with urgent medical or financial needs who had appealed for compensation by December 31, 1999, and that more compensation could be distributed pending the results of the Commission's review of petitions by Sahrawi claimants. However, numerous cases remain pending. In an interview, CCDH President Driss Dahak claimed that as of June 22, the commission had settled 609 cases of disappearances, paying compensation in 376. It also had paid compensation in 712 cases

of arbitrary detention and had turned down 233 applications. According to the CCDH, as of late September, over 5,000 applications had been filed, including multiple applications for each person who had disappeared. By year's end, the Arbitration Commission had awarded approximately \$45 million (495 million dirhams) in compensation, including employment assistance and medical care.

Nevertheless, human rights organizations maintain that the compensation process is neither independent nor transparent, that it provides insufficient compensation, and that it precludes appeal. Some groups also criticized the small number of cases settled, citing that thousands remained. The CCDH claimed that it has completed the disappearance and Sahawri cases and currently was investigating individual claims, which take longer. On November 7, prior to a national meeting on human rights, the AMDH, the Moroccan Organization of Human Rights (OMDH) and Moroccan Forum for Truth and Justice (FMVJ--created by victims of forced disappearance and their surviving family members) proposed the creation of an independent commission to determine the truth in past cases of human rights violations. Several international organizations attended the meeting, as well as 14 Moroccan political parties and organizations.

Associations that seek information regarding those who have disappeared, including the FMVJ, an executive coordinating committee of former Sahrawi political prisoners, and a group specifically representing Tazmamart prison survivors, operate openly, and call upon the Government for full disclosure of events surrounding cases that date back to the 1960's. Several front-page articles in newspapers affiliated with parties in the governing coalition called at various times during the year for full disclosure on all outstanding cases of disappearance. The associations also called for compensation to families of those who have disappeared, death certificates and the return of the remains of those who died, and prosecution of responsible officials. The Government had indicated in recent years that it would be more open to providing information regarding these past cases. However, it now claims to have released all the information it possesses, an assertion that several human rights NGO's dispute. Throughout the year, FMVJ leaders met with leaders of national political parties, although the FMVJ claimed in 2000 that political parties were reluctant to help them address past disappearances. Associations in the Western Sahara that seek information on disappearances were not free from government interference; there were reports that some members of these associations were harassed and intimidated while seeking information regarding missing Sahrawis. Some also continued to be denied passports (see Section 2.d.).

On January 16, activist Abdelkarim Manouzi claimed that some of the disappeared persons still unaccounted for were alive and in Government custody. However, he offered no evidence. On November 10 and 11, a committee of families of abducted persons staged a hunger strike to protest "the procrastination of the authorities in replying to the crucial requests of the families of abducted people."

Beginning in October 2000, the Government has permitted an organization of former political detainees, as well as hundreds of human rights activists, to travel to and hold remembrance ceremonies at the notorious former secret detention center at Tazmamart, whose existence the authorities formerly denied (see Section 2.a.). The press is now free to write stories about Tazmamart.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The law prohibits torture, and the Government claims that the use of torture has been discontinued; however, some members of the security forces still tortured or otherwise abused detainees. The Penal Code stipulates sentences up to life imprisonment for public servants who "use or oblige the use of violence" against others in the exercise of their official duties. By law, pretrial-investigating judges must, if asked to do so or if they themselves notice physical marks that so warrant, refer the detained person to an expert in forensic medicine. However, according to legal experts affiliated with human rights groups, judges often ignored this requirement in practice. While there were some well-publicized prosecutions for abuses by security forces, the failure to prosecute most other cases raised concerns regarding the Government's commitment to resolving the problem.

On February 20, a person died after police reportedly abused him while in custody (see Section 1.a.).

In January 2000, Ali Akzkane died while in police custody in Tiznit. The Inspector General of the National Security Police investigated the matter. The investigation determined that Akzkane had been suffering from depression and committed suicide in his jail cell. The Government did not file any charges (see Section 1.a.).

Following his release from prison in May 2000 after a royal pardon, Sadok El-Kihal, a trucker and regional bureau member of the Istiqlal party's General Union of Moroccan Workers (UGTM), contacted the AMDH. He claimed that authorities had arrested arbitrarily, jailed, tortured, and falsely convicted him in June 1999 following his participation in a national truckers' strike. El-Kihal alleged that security forces in the Gendarmerie of Taouriate (Oujda province) tortured him for almost 24 hours, suspending him by his arms for extended

periods while beating his fingers and feet. El-Kihal also alleged to AMDH that members of the Gendarmerie tied his hands behind his back, bent him backward on his knees, and applied pressure to his stomach while fingers were forced down his throat. El-Kihal alleged that two adjutants in the Gendarmerie participated in his torture. El-Kihal claimed that his jailers wrote a false police report, which they forced him to endorse with his thumbprint without first allowing him to read. He alleged that this police report formed the basis of his conviction at the Oujda court of appeals, which sentenced him to 2 years' imprisonment. No charges were filed based on his allegations during the year. At year's end, the investigation of El-Kihal was ongoing (see Sections 1.d., 1.e., and 6.a).

In July 2000, a Royal Armed Forces patrol took Mustapha Najiaji and another person into custody. According to the other person, the patrol beat Najiaji at a Ministry of the Interior holding cell. Najiaji later fell down, lost consciousness, and stopped breathing, at which time the security forces released the second person. The security forces reported that Najiaji committed suicide by hanging himself. The second person later claimed Najiaji died from beatings by the security forces. The AMDH reported that the autopsy indicated that Najiaji was the victim of violence before his death, and expressed concern over the slow pace of the investigation. No charges were filed in the case during the year. The investigation of Najiaji was ongoing at year's end (see Section 1.a).

In August 2000, the media reported allegations by Abderrahmane Jamali that police officers in the Ain Sebaa-Hay Al-Hassani station in Casablanca had tortured him for 3 days, once in the presence of a citizen who had filed a complaint against him. Press reports alleged that the incident began when the plaintiff twice filed a complaint against Jamali for abuse of confidence and theft. After the prosecutor dismissed the first complaint for lack of proof, the plaintiff requested a reopening and more thorough investigation of the case. Press reports alleged that Jamali subsequently was detained, tortured for 3 days, and then convicted and sentenced by a Casablanca court to 5 months' imprisonment. Jamali reportedly fainted during the sentencing hearing, and became ill within days of his incarceration. After his family sent a letter to the prison director requesting the director's intervention, he was sent to various medical facilities. At Averroes Hospital, doctors in August 2000 detected an infection allegedly transmitted by parasites found on rodents. According to the Party of Progress and Socialism's French-language daily newspaper Al-Bayane, doctors also found signs of "physical cruelty" on Jamali's body. The marks reportedly included contusions and bruises on his neck and knees. A doctor at Averroes wrote a letter to Al-Bayane claiming that the infection Jamali contracted "does not explain all of the signs that we observed during (his) clinical examination." Jamali later filed complaints against three agents of the judicial police for torture; the Casablanca police department announced in August 2000 that it had opened an investigation into the charges. Some newspapers called for an investigation into the court's handling of the case because the judge and prosecutor allegedly failed to inquire into the detainee's fragile state of health, as required by law. No charges were filed in this case during the year, and the investigation was ongoing at year's end.

In September 2000, the media reported on two cases of alleged torture by a Royal Gendarmerie officer in Zaio. According to the reports, the officer tortured two persons in order to extort money from their family and friends. In one of the cases, a cafe owner alleged that the officer slapped him in September 2000 in front of his customers, used force to remove him from his establishment, and subjected him to various forms of torture at brigade headquarters. In the second case, an elderly woman brought suit against the same officer for torturing her son and extorting approximately \$450 (5,000 dirhams) from her to stop the torture. After he was informed of the cases, Zaio's municipal president (who also is a Member of Parliament) reportedly referred the cases immediately to the national authorities. An investigation into the alleged torture cases was ongoing at year's end; no charges have been filed in either case.

In 2000 the OMDH appealed to the Interior Minister to implement a series of proposed measures, including measures reinforcing individual protections against torture through the full implementation of the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, providing for the destruction of police files on former political prisoners or exiles, and ending illegal punitive detention measures by local authorities. According to the OMDH, torture in detention largely continues to escape the notice of the judiciary. The OMDH noted that the implementation of judges' instructions on eliminating the use of torture has been "exceedingly slow." While the OMDH admitted that the use of torture has diminished over the years, it claimed that it has not disappeared. The OMDH alleged in its report that those who commit such abuses "do so with impunity in almost all cases." The NGO called on the Government to harmonize domestic law with its responsibilities under the U.N. Convention Against Torture, to ensure full independence for the judiciary, and to punish those who resort to torture.

An investigation remains ongoing into charges of police abuse of protesters and persons in custody during late 1999 in Laayoune. No charges were filed in connection with the abuse and the investigation was closed. A Sahawari student claimed to have been tortured with burning cigarettes by police during detention following large-scale demonstrations by mostly Sahrawi students near the Marrakech University campus in May 2000. A university student arrested in Rabat following solidarity protests with Sahrawi students in May 2000 claimed to

have been beaten severely and interrogated regarding his links with other Sahrawi students and human rights activists; charges against him and 13 others were dismissed in November 2000. Due to OMDH's efforts, the allegations in these cases were investigated; however, no charges were filed as a result.

The Government continued to admit past torture and abuses; however, it has not prosecuted those responsible. In 2000 the Government permitted publication of "The Unachieved Past," regarding the harsh conditions in the Kenitra high security prison (the author has since been awarded a literary prize from the King himself for his most recent novel). The authorities also permitted publication of a comic book called "They Even Starve Rats," which vividly recounted the torture, injustice, and humiliation that the author and others suffered at the hands of the authorities (see Section 2.a.).

In early January, Ahmed Marzouki published a book, "Tazmamart: Cell 10," about his 18 years as a prisoner at the notorious Tazmamart prison. The book described Marzouki's ordeal, including the cruelty of the guards, torture, solitary confinement, and the perpetual darkness. Marzouki finally was granted a passport on January 17 (after a public appeal to the King), and allowed to travel to Paris and publicize his book. The government-owned television station, 2M, carried an interview with Marzouki (see Section 2.a. and 2.d.).

Police and security forces reportedly used excessive force to disrupt a number of protests and demonstrations during the year, although such incidents declined in comparison to the previous year. On April 17, the police reportedly used excessive force to disperse taxi drivers in Rabat and Sale who were conducting a peaceful protest against what they considered unreasonably large fines imposed by the police. The taxi union criticized the Government's action. Seventeen persons reportedly were injured (see Section 2.b.).

On May 3, five demonstrators reportedly were injured when police violently disrupted sit-in by unemployed graduates outside the Employment Department in the Western Saharan city of Laayoune (see Section 1.d.). On November 14, security forces using clubs broke up an attempted a sit-in by striking teachers in front of the Ministry of Finance in Rabat. According to press reports, some of the strikers were injured seriously (see Sections 2.b. and 6.a.).

Prison conditions remain harsh, although there have been some improvements in medical care and overcrowding. Credible reports indicate that harsh treatment and conditions continue, often as a result of chronic overcrowding. Despite being designed to hold 4,000 inmates, Oukacha Central Prison in Casablanca currently holds more than 7,000 prisoners. Human rights groups allege that poor medical care in prisons results in unnecessary deaths. In addition to extreme overcrowding, malnutrition and lack of hygiene continue to aggravate the poor health conditions inside prisons.

According to a February article by the newspaper Liberation, most prisons lack adequate medical care and supplies for prisoners, with the exceptions of the prisons at Sale and Casablanca. Almost one half of prisons do not have a full-time doctor, and new inmates are not provided a screening physical. However, 42 physicians now work full-time for the prison system, compared with 2 in 1988. Extremely harsh conditions have been reported inside the detention center of Ain Atiq outside of Rabat. While Ain Atiq's status as a detention or social center is not defined clearly, it often receives homeless, vagrant, and persons with mental disabilities, in addition to juvenile delinquents. Negligence at Ain Atiq reportedly has led to serious problems, such as hygienic and nutritional deficiencies, and harsh general living conditions. The center also is reportedly underequipped, understaffed, and unable to provide adequate medical care. In the past, human rights organizations have called for Ain Atiq's closure, as well as of other similar centers.

In an article in May, Liberation reported the results of 15 visits to prisons conducted by the Moroccan Prison Observatory (OMP) between February and July 2000. The NGO reported that the Moroccan prisons housed 55,000 prisoners, despite being designed to hold only 39,000. It also reported problems of corruption, drug use, and violence. The report also criticized the prisons for mixing young, first-time offenders with hardened criminals, as well as the lack of training and education for inmates. In response the Ministry of Justice claimed that the OMP arrived at its conclusions without visiting all the prisons. It also noted that 12 of the existing 43 prisons are being enlarged and 19 more prisons are under construction.

The Ministry of Justice's Penitentiary Administration, which administers all Moroccan civil prisons, uses the services of 126 doctors. Prisoners have benefited from vaccination programs, and the prison medical budget has grown 61 percent since 1998. The Penitentiary Administration has autopsied deceased inmates since 1993. The Administration also was examining alternatives to incarceration for some criminals.

In May the AMDH issued a communique reporting that 14 prisoners had died in Ukasha (also spelled "Oakacha") Prison in Casablanca during 2000, and that 11 had died through May 15. The AMDH claimed that the cause was diseases contracted by the prisoners, all of which were "the result of the inhuman and unhealthy conditions of the Ukasha prison." The AMDH also requested investigations into the deaths. The

Government did not respond. On October 2, the newspaper Al Ahdath Al-Maghribiyah followed up with an article entitled "Will an Investigation Ever Take Place on the Causes of Death in Ukasha Prison?" According to the article, some prisoners blamed poor sanitary conditions in Ukasha for the increasing deaths there. The article claimed the doctor assigned to care for 8,000 prisoners spent only half days at the prison and neglected prisoner's health needs.

On March 30, the prison in Kenitra invited doctors, journalists, and members of the OMP for the observance of "Spring of Prisoners" day, designed to improve prison conditions through public awareness. Also in late March, the National Prison Administration hosted a visit by an international women's group (including a diplomatic and international spouse association) to the women's wing of Sale Prison. Near the end of the year, during Ramadan, the King made an unprecedented prison visit to observe conditions.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention or Exile

The Constitution does not prohibit arbitrary arrest or detention, and police continued to use arbitrary arrest and detention. Although legal provisions for due process have been revised extensively in recent years, reports indicate that authorities sometimes ignored them. Although police usually make arrests in public and during the day, they do not always identify themselves and do not always obtain warrants. Preventive detention is limited to 48 hours, with one 24-hour extension allowed at the prosecutor's discretion. In state security cases, the preventive detention period is 96 hours; the prosecutor also may extend this time. Defendants are denied access to counsel during this initial period, which is when the accused is interrogated and abuse or torture is most likely to occur. Some members of the security forces, long accustomed to indefinite precharge access to detainees, continue to resist the time limits, which were adopted in 1997.

The police are required to notify a person's next of kin of an arrest as soon as possible. However, lawyers are not always informed promptly of the date of arrest, and thus are not always able to monitor compliance with the preventive detention limits. While the law provides for a limited system of bail, it rarely was granted. However, defendants in some instances are released on their own recognizance. The law does not provide for habeas corpus or its equivalent. Under a separate military code, military authorities may detain members of the military without warrants or public trial.

Although accused persons generally are brought to trial within an initial period of 2 months, prosecutors may request up to five additional 2-month extensions of pretrial detention. Thus, an accused person may be kept in detention for up to 1 year prior to trial.

On May 3, in the Western Saharan city of Laayoune, the local headquarters for the Democratic Confederation of Labor (CDT) issued a statement claiming that security forces forcibly dispersed a sit-in by unemployed graduates outside the Employment Department Headquarters. Some of the students sought refuge in the Confederation Democratique du Travail (CDT) headquarters. Five demonstrators reportedly were injured and seven CDT members arrested. The statement called for the release of those arrested. They received a royal pardon in November.

Forced exile is provided by law; however, there were no known instances of its use during the year.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; however, the courts remain to some extent subject to extrajudicial pressures, including government influence. Some members of the judiciary are corrupt. The Government continued to implement reforms intended to increase judicial independence and impartiality. In 1999 the Ministry of Justice created a system of commercial courts for business litigation and began to implement a 5-year reform plan that emphasized transparency, accountability, and professionalism. The OMDH and other groups have criticized the Government regarding the slow pace of judicial reform. During the past 3 years, the administrative courts frequently have ruled against local governments that exceeded their authority. However, the Government was slow in providing restitution and damages.

There are four levels in the common law court system: Communal and district courts, courts of first instance, the Appeals Court, and the Supreme Court. While in theory there is a single court system under the Ministry of Justice, other courts also operate, including: The Special Court of Justice, which handles cases of civil servants who are implicated in corruption; administrative courts, which deal with the decisions of the bureaucracy; commercial courts, which deal with business disputes; and the military tribunal, which tries cases involving military personnel and, on certain occasions, matters pertaining to state security (although state security cases also may fall within the jurisdiction of the regular court system).

Although there is a single court system for most nonmilitary matters, family issues such as marriage, divorce, child support and custody, and inheritance are adjudicated by judges trained in Shari'a (Islamic law) as applied in the country. Judges considering criminal cases or cases in nonfamily areas of civil law generally are trained in the French legal tradition. All judges trained in recent years are graduates of the National Institute for Judicial Studies, where they undergo 3 years of study heavily focused on human rights and the rule of law. It is not necessary to be a lawyer to become a judge, and the majority of judges are not lawyers.

In general detainees are arraigned before a court of first instance. If the infraction is minor and not contested, the judge may order the defendant released or impose a light sentence. If an investigation is required, the judge may release defendants on their own recognizance. If the judge determines that a confession was obtained under duress, the law requires him to exclude it from evidence. However, according to reliable sources, cases often are adjudicated on the basis of confessions, some of which are obtained under duress.

While appeal courts may in some cases be used as a second reference for courts of first instance, they primarily handle cases involving crimes punishable by 5 years or more in prison. In practice defendants before appeals courts who are implicated in such crimes consequently have no method of appeal if a judgment goes against them. The Supreme Court does not review and rule on cases sent to it by courts of appeal; in its role as a court of cassation, the Supreme Court may overturn an appellate court's ruling on procedural grounds only. The absence of appeals for defendants in such crimes therefore becomes more problematic given the fact that an investigation into the case by an examining magistrate is mandatory only in those crimes punishable by sentences of life imprisonment or death.

Justice Minister Azziman continued his efforts to end petty corruption in the judiciary. The caseload for the Special Court of Justice has increased, and the Justice Ministry publicizes the disciplinary action taken against judicial personnel. Nonetheless, the court system remained subject to extrajudicial pressures. Observers alleged that petty bribery remained a routine cost of court business. In some courts, especially in minor criminal cases, observers alleged that defendants or their families must bribe court officers and judges to secure a favorable ruling.

The Special Court of Justice, despite its resource constraints, increasingly has prosecuted public servants for corruption. On April 24, the Special Court of Justice announced the verdict in its first major public financial case. It acquitted 2 defendants and sentenced 14 others to prison terms from 6 months to 15 years, plus restitution. The case involved embezzlement of \$2.16 million (24 million dirhams) from the Professional Millers Association. Since 1999 the Special Court of Justice has reviewed 59 cases involving prison administration personnel. On November 9, the Minister of Justice reported that since mid-1998, 707 disciplinary cases involving the misconduct of justice system personnel had been opened. Of these 129 were judges, 49 of whom had been removed permanently from the bench.

Following the installation of a new Government in 1998, the judiciary's relationship with the Ministry of Interior began to be less dependent. Nevertheless, judges continue to work closely with the Interior Ministry's network of local district officials, or "caids" (although as judicial police, caids technically fall under the jurisdiction of the Justice Ministry), who legally are charged with the responsibility of questioning criminal defendants. Caids prepare the written summary of an arrest and subsequent interrogation. The summary is admissible in court as an element of the evidentiary process and can carry great weight with the judge. In the last several years, the Ministry of Justice began to attempt to assert its authority and control over judges; however, such control was not realized by year's end.

The law does not distinguish political and security cases from common criminal cases. In serious state security cases (offenses deemed against the Monarchy, Islam, or the territorial integrity of the country), communications between the Ministry of Interior and the court are more direct. At the Government's discretion, such cases may be brought before a specially constituted military tribunal, which is subservient to other branches of the Government, especially the military and the Ministry of Interior.

Aside from external pressures, resource constraints also affect the court system. Consequently, criminal defendants charged with less serious offenses often receive only a cursory hearing, with judges relying on police reports to render decisions. Although the Ministry of Justice provides an attorney at public expense for serious crimes (when the offense carries a maximum sentence of more than 5 years), appointed attorneys who are not paid adequately often provide inadequate representation.

During the year, the courts continued to handle an increasing number of cases that involved sensitive human rights issues, most of which were covered openly and extensively by national and international media. Defense attorneys continued to claim that judicial processes in these cases were marked by significant irregularities, and that such irregularities infringe on the right to a fair trial for the accused.

A number of persons were tried during the year for their participation in protests in December 2000. They had been arrested in December 2000 in connection with peaceful demonstrations held to celebrate the International Day of Human Rights, during which security forces violently attacked human rights activists, members of the JCO, and unemployed university graduates (see Sections 2.b and 4). Between February 1 and March 1, 64 JCO members were convicted (and several acquitted) in trials in Rabat, Fez and Marrakech. Prison sentences ranged from 3 months (suspended) to 1 year and fines of up to approximately \$450 (5,000 dirhams). In addition 36 AMDH members were convicted for organizing an unauthorized demonstration, including the president, Abderrahmane Benomar, and other leading AMDH members. On May 16, they received sentences of 3 months plus fines of approximately \$270 (3,000 dirhams). The cases were criticized in the domestic and international press. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch declared that "intimidating human rights defenders with jail sentences for exercising their right of freedom of expression is unacceptable." On November 21, the Rabat Court of Appeals overturned the conviction of the AMDH members. The Court held that the AMDH had requested permission for the event, but that the Ministry of the Interior had not denied it in writing, as it was required to do.

In July Ahmed Boukhari, a former intelligence agent, made public allegations regarding the Government's role in the 1965 Paris disappearance of socialist activist Mehdi Ben Barka. Within a month, the authorities incarcerated Boukhari on charges of issuing bad checks. On August 28, the Casablanca-Anfa Court of First Instance sentenced Boukhari to one year in prison and a fine of approximately \$14,000 (155,000 dirhams) for writing bad checks in the early 1990's. The defense maintained that Boukhari previously had been convicted and punished for issuing some of the checks in 1998. On October 16, the Casablanca Court of Appeals ruled, in Boukhari's favor, determining that Boukhari already had already been sentenced and punished for issuing the 1998 checks. For issuing the remaining checks, the Court of Appeals reduced Boukhari's sentence to 3 months' imprisonment and a fine of approximately \$1,350 (15,000 dirhams). The Court of Appeals blamed the prosecution for not providing the file of the earlier conviction during the trial, and based its decision on that ground.

However, on December 5, Boukhari appeared in court in a defamation suit brought against him by three former intelligence officers whom Boukhari alleged were involved the kidnaping and murder of Ben Barka. All three requested damages of approximately \$90,000 (1 million dirhams). On December 12, Boukhari was sentenced to 3 months in prison and ordered to pay approximately \$28,800 (320,000 dirhams), including \$9,000 (100,000 dirhams) to each of the former agents.

The Ben Barka case continues to embarrass the Government. The King himself, in an August interview with the French newspaper *Le Figaro*, declared he wanted the truth to come out concerning the disappearance of Ben Barka. Most Moroccans see this case as a patent, heavy-handed attempt by the Government to prevent Boukhari from talking about the Ben Barka disappearance. Nevertheless, the press reported on this case in great detail.

The Supreme Court and the Courts of Appeals issued several decisions during the year concerning continuing cases originally tried in previous years. In November 2000, 14 Islamist students who had been arrested during violent clashes between students and police at Mohammedia University earlier in November were convicted of disturbance of public order and sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment and fines ranging from \$45 to \$135 (500 to 1,500 dirhams). The alleged victims of the students' vandalism did not appear at the trial to testify or to be cross-examined. On January 2, amidst extremely tight security, due to concerns over possible demonstrations by Islamist supporters, the case was opened by the Casablanca Court of Appeals, and then rescheduled for January 23. After a hearing on January 23, the Court of Appeals acquitted one person, reduced two sentences to 8 months, reduced one sentence to 7 months, and reduced the remaining sentences to 4 months (see Sections 1.c. and 2.b.).

Mustapha Adib, an Air Force captain, originally was tried in December 1999 before a military court for allegedly violating the Military Code and libeling the military. The authorities detained Adib after he spoke out against military corruption and harassment to a journalist from the French newspaper *Le Monde*. In February 2000, a military court convicted Adib. The court denied the defense's requests that the court make the trial public, allow the defense to summon more than a dozen defense witnesses and present documentary evidence, and recuse one of the military judges, who was a former superior of Adib's. The judge whom the defense asked be recused allegedly was responsible for blocking Adib's promotions after Adib made the allegations of corruption in a 1998 letter to then-Crown Prince Sidi Mohammed (now King Mohammed VI). The military tribunal sentenced Adib to the maximum prison term of 5 years and expelled him from the air force. Human rights activists criticized the conduct of the trial; the OMDH issued a report in February 2000 contending that closed trials unjustly influenced the results and accused the court of partiality in refusing to recuse Adib's former superior. After deciding on a "silent defense" to protest the military court's conduct of the case, the attorney representing Adib characterized the trial as a "travesty of justice." In June 2000, the Supreme Court overruled the military court and announced that a new military tribunal composed of different judges would retry the case.

A newly constituted military court in Rabat retried Adib's case in October 2000, and after 3 days of hearings, during which the court again refused to hear witnesses requested by the defense, the military court found Adib guilty of the charges initially brought against him. The court sentenced Adib to 21/2 years in prison and expelled him from the military. On February 21, the Supreme Court denied Adib's final appeal. The case remains very visible. The truth regarding Adib's accusations of corruption was not a defense and, in fact, never was contested. On September 24, Adib published a letter from Sale Prison, distributed through human rights groups. The letter announced Adib's sixth hunger strike and protested his arbitrary detention, his lack of a fair trial, the flagrant pressure placed on the judges, and the silence and negligence of the authorities concerning his case. An article in the weekly newspaper *Le Journal* criticized the silence of the Prime Minister, who previously had discussed "whistleblower" laws to protect such persons as Adib and had publicly praised Adib's efforts to fight corruption. Adib remains an Amnesty International "Prisoner of Conscience," and in 2000 was awarded a Transparency International Integrity Award.

In April 2000, a Moroccan court in the Western Sahara city of Laayoune sentenced five Sahwari youths to prison terms of between 5 and 10 years for the "formation of a criminal organization" after their alleged participation in a March 2000 stone-throwing event, which reliable sources say was spontaneous, unorganized, and lasted only 5 minutes. Human rights activists criticized the handling of the trial, particularly the court's refusal to hear witnesses who allegedly would have testified that two of the defendants were elsewhere at the time of the incident. The prosecution allegedly presented no evidence that the five defendants were the ones who had thrown rocks during this incident. One defense attorney alleged that the judicial police investigating the affair committed several illegal acts by unlawfully entering homes of the defendants and detaining them, torturing the accused during their detention, and forcing them to sign police reports under duress, which they were not allowed to read, and which they claimed contained falsehoods. The decision has been appealed to the Supreme Court; however, before the trial could be held, the five youths were granted a royal pardon in November.

Four Sahrawis who were sentenced in 2000 to 4 years in prison for threatening the internal security of the state also were granted a royal pardon in November.

In November the King pardoned all those arrested during the September 1999 protests in the Western Sahara city of Laayoune. A total of 56 prisoners were released (see Section 2.b.).

According to some groups, the Government continued to hold a number of political prisoners. The AMDH states that 20 political prisoners remained in detention at year's end on charges of trying to smuggle arms into Algeria. Unlike in the past, according to the OMDH, the Government held no political prisoners at year's end; OMDH had claimed that seven political prisoners remained in detention in 2000.

In the past, the Ministry of Interior claimed that there were 55 Islamists serving sentences for offenses that ranged from arms smuggling in the 1980's to participating in a bomb attack on a hotel in Marrakech in 1994. There also have been past claims that some of these Islamists were imprisoned solely for calling for an Islamic state during the 1980's. The AMDH claims that two members of the "Group of 26," an Islamist group involved in smuggling arms into the country from Algeria in the mid-1980's, remained in prison. The other 24 members completed their sentences or otherwise were released at various times between 1994 and the end of the year. Various international human rights groups' estimates of the number of persons in prison for advocating independence for the Western Sahara vary from none to 700. Amnesty International identifies 60 persons whom it considers to be political prisoners. According to several human rights organizations, achieving consensus on a definitive number of political prisoners is extremely difficult, mainly because conditions in the Western Sahara complicate attempts to confirm whether Sahrawis were imprisoned solely for their political affiliation or open advocacy of Western Saharan independence, or whether they were imprisoned for other actions in violation of the law. The AMDH claims that it knows of no persons imprisoned for having overtly advocated Western Saharan independence. The Government does not consider any of its prisoners to be political prisoners.

Although the Government claims that it no longer holds political prisoners, it permits international humanitarian organizations to visit prisoners whom such organizations consider to be imprisoned for political reasons; however, no organizations visited such prisoners during the year.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home or Correspondence

The Constitution states that the home is inviolable and that no search or investigation may take place without a search warrant, and the law stipulates that a search warrant may be issued by a prosecutor on good cause; however, authorities sometimes ignored these provisions.

Government security services monitored certain persons and organizations, both foreign and Moroccan and

government informers monitored activities on university campuses.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for freedom of expression; however, the Government restricted discussion regarding the three topics that the Government considers sensitive: The Monarchy, Morocco's claim to the Western Sahara, and the sanctity of Islam. Nonetheless, an interview was published on October 26 that criticized the King concerning an issue of religion. Newspapers and weeklies from across the political spectrum, from Socialist to nationalist to Islamist, published freely, and the Government continued to permit extensive coverage of formerly taboo topics during the year.

The Government owns the official press agency, Maghreb Arab Press (MAP), and the Arabic daily newspaper, Al-Anbaa. The Government also supports two semiofficial dailies, the French-language Le Matin and the Arabic-language Assahra Al Maghribia. In addition the Government provides subsidies to the rest of the press through price supports for newsprint and office space. A 1958 decree grants the Government the authority to register and license domestic newspapers and journals. Authorities may use the licensing process to prevent the publication of materials that they believe crosses the threshold of tolerable dissent. Offending publications may be declared a danger to state security and seized, the publisher's license suspended, and equipment destroyed. The Ministry of Interior may control foreign publications by collecting "banned" publications after they have been distributed. In December the authorities confiscated an issue of the Spanish publication El Pais. Human rights activist Christine Serfaty's book, Letter from Morocco, which has been published in Europe, has not been made available in the country.

The Press Code empowers the Minister of Interior to confiscate publications that are judged offensive by the Government. Under the code, the Prime Minister may order the indefinite suspension of a publication. The Press Code also empowers the Government to censor newspapers directly by ordering them not to report on specific items or events. In most past instances, government control of the media generally has been exercised through directives and "guidance" from the Ministry of Interior. A proposed new press law, still before Parliament, would give such authority to the courts rather than the executive branch.

There were approximately 2,000 domestic and foreign newspapers, magazines, and journals in circulation during the year. The Government generally tolerates satirical and often stinging editorials in the opposition parties' dailies. The media continue to engage regularly in self-censorship to avoid the Government's attention and possible sanctions.

In January journalist Tayeb Hannouda allegedly was arrested while taking pictures of the governor's office in Casablanca. During the arrest, Hannouda reportedly suffered a broken shoulder; in addition his camera was broken.

On January 10, the Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights League (FIDH) held its 34th congress in Casablanca. The presidents of FIDH and AMDH, as well as other activists, openly delivered extremely critical speeches, highlighting the then-recent closure of the three publications above, and the arrests following the December 2000 AMDH protests.

The Government continued to allow publication of books about the past torture and mistreatment in its prisons. In early January, Ahmed Marzouki published "Tazmamart: Cellule 10," about his 18 years as a prisoner at the notorious Tazmamart prison. In 2000 the Government had permitted publication of "The Unachieved Past" and "They Even Starve Rats," also about life and torture in the country's prisons. The Government-owned television station, 2M, which employs several former political prisoners, carried an interview with Marzouki (see Section 1.c).

According to press reports in late spring and summer 2000, the authorities allegedly blocked the publication of two newspapers associated with the JCO--Al Adl Wal Ihsane and Rissalat Al Fatuwa--by ordering printers to suspend their distribution.

According to press reports, the Government continued to block the publication of the JCO's newspapers throughout the year, and in mid-April, seized thousands of copies of the JCO's weekly youth organization newspaper, Rissalat Al Fatuwa. The authorities also blocked two of the JCO's Web sites at the same time, with domestic access to them cut off. The head of the Paris-based NGO, Journalists Without Borders sent a protest letter, also in April, to Minister of Interior Midaoui, criticizing the Government's actions.

On January 25, the Islamic movement JCO held a press conference claiming that the authorities exerted pressure on print shops to prohibit the printing of its newspaper Rissalat Al Fatuwa. The organization claimed its last issue was printed offset and had been distributed throughout Morocco by its members. The organization periodically claimed that the Government had pressured printing firms not to print or distribute the publication.

On February 18, Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine (who previously had been detained under house arrest for refusing to acknowledge the religious authority of then King Hassan II) presented his new book, "Justice, the Islamists, and Power." According to the March 2 issue of the magazine Demain, the printer's shop was broken into in October 2000, and 800 copies of the book were stolen, among other items. Many observers suspect government involvement.

The law provides for jail sentences, fines, and damages for newspaper officials found guilty of libeling public officials. On March 1, the Casablanca Court of First Instance ruled in favor of Foreign Minister Benaissa in his May 2000 libel suit against Le Journal Hebdo, which claimed in April 2000 that Benaissa had embezzled \$4 million (44 million dirhams) while he was the Ambassador to the United States. The editor, Boubker Jamai, received a sentence of 3 months in prison. The manager, Ali Amar, received a sentence of 2 months. Each was fined approximately \$900 (10,000 dirhams). The publication was ordered to pay approximately \$180,000 (2 million dirhams) in damages. RSF claimed that the verdict was "contrary to the rights of the citizens to be freely informed." The publication changed its name (dropping Hebdo) and continued to publish without further incident. The publication claimed to have filed an appeal on March 2, and had not paid the 2 million dirhams in damages to Benaissa by year's end.

On March 5, Jamai himself announced that he intended to file a similar suit for defamation against Ahmed Midaoui, then-Minister of the Interior, who declared during a television broadcast that Jamai was not "100 percent Moroccan," as his newspaper supported the "Polisario and Morocco's enemies." The following month, another publication, Demain, ran, without incident, an article highly critical of alleged nepotism and abuse in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

In March Khalid Adroune from the television station 2M claimed that the Government attempted to prohibit him from attending a seminar. Adroune eventually attended the seminar; however, it was not broadcast by 2M.

According to the weekly Al Hayat Al Yaoumia, on April 6 police broke into a distribution company in Casablanca and seized 10,000 copies of Rissalat Al Fatuwa. The Paris-based Reporters without Borders (RSF) criticized the Government's actions. On April 22, the Moroccan National Press Syndicate (SNPM) also criticized the incident.

On April 10, the Moroccan International Weekly published an interview with Abdelhamid Amine, the newly elected president of the AMDH. Amine claimed that the Government had taken no action regarding the AMDH list of 14 persons publicly accused of torture in October 2000, but had instead prosecuted the authors of the list. Amine was one of 36 AMDH activists arrested in December 2000 and sentenced in May to 4 months and a fine (see Sections 1.e. and 4). On April 15, Amine was prohibited from participating in a broadcast in which he was scheduled to appear.

The Government banned the May 17 issue of the French weekly Le Courier International, which included an article regarding the Berber issue in Morocco. RSF criticized the banning.

On May 27, the Government seized a double issue of Rissalat Al Fatuwa that dealt with human rights abuses suffered by the JCO during the past year.

On June 22, a local government official in Khouribga, Hassan Hamada, allegedly kidnaped and attempted to kill journalist Mustapha Bekkari from the newspaper Rissalat Al Umma. Bekkari was covering a sit-in of unemployed university graduates. The Ministry of Interior investigated, but no charges were filed.

On October 1, the Moroccan National Press Union stated that it would closely examine the case of Channel 1 TV employee Mustapha Abbasi, whom the Government suspended "just after he presented a program on all the detentions that involved activists of the Moroccan Union for Human Rights."

According to MAP, on October 25 the Rabat prosecutor initiated a preliminary investigation against Ali Lemrabet, publisher of Demain magazine for publishing an article claiming that the Royal Palace in Skhirat would be sold. The prosecutor's office claimed the article contained lies, and the investigation aimed "to safeguard the code of ethics of journalism." On November 7, a communique by the AMDH expressed its concerns about the harassment of Demain director Ali Lemrabet. The case convened on November 7 in the

Rabat Court of First Instance, and Lemrabet received a sentence of 4 months and a fine of approximately \$2,700 (30,000 dirhams), which was widely criticized by press and human rights organizations.

On November 1, the King prohibited the Spanish newspaper El Mundo from covering his trip to the Western Sahara, allegedly because of critical articles that it had published. Other Spanish media freely covered and reported on the trip.

On January 12 and January 15, the Government reversed its December 2000 decision and lifted the ban against three independent weekly publications (Le Journal, Demain, and Assahifa) known for their politically sensitive reporting.

On October 26, the press freely published an interview with Dr. Driss Kettani, an extremist Islamic scholar, in which he accused the Minister of Islamic Affairs of abuse of power. He also called a September 16 ecumenical ceremony in the Rabat cathedral "a big sin" for Muslims and stated that "the notion of dialogue among the three monotheistic religions is a Zionist idea." Kettani's uncensored criticism attacked the King both as the political and religious leader of the country.

In general press articles containing unflattering material that routinely had been prevented from circulation in past years, with the exception of those related to the topics the Government still considers sensitive, were permitted free circulation during the year. These included reports on corruption in the Government and military, financial scandals at public institutions, sensitive human rights-related court cases, torture, violence against women, the exploitation of child maids, prostitution, poverty, sexual abuse of children, and harsh conditions inside prisons. Some critical books were published and are openly sold, such as "1961-1999: A Broken Hope," by Ignace Dalle, which is highly critical of the reign of King Hassan II.

In 2000 the King announced that the Government was preparing legislation for reforming the Public Liberties Law (see Section 2.b.), and Prime Minister Youssoufi's Cabinet reviewed a draft in December 2000. The most significant proposed change was to give the judiciary the authority to shut down or suspend a publication, removing that authority from the executive branch. The SNPM claimed that the draft still permits the Government to seize, confiscate, and ban publications, and to punish those convicted of libel and defamation with jail sentences. Domestic critics and human rights activists have long criticized such provisions that widely are perceived to repress and stifle freedom of expression. The proposed legislation was before Parliament but had not been acted on by year's end.

On April 10, the SNPM launched a national campaign to protect journalists from harassment and repression. It also called for the revision of the Press Code. On May 3, the SNPM and the International Federation of Journalists (FIJE) used International Press Day to launch a campaign to protect journalists. On November 7 in Casablanca, the SNPM, four human rights organizations, the Union of Moroccan Writers, the Bar Association, the Publishers Association, and Transparency International created an independent body to promote journalistic ethics and freedom of expression.

The Government controls Radio-Television Marocaine (RTM) broadcasts. Another major broadcaster is the French-backed Medi-1, which operates from Tangier and broadcasts throughout Morocco and other parts of North Africa. While nominally private and independent, Medi-1 practices self-censorship, as do other media outlets. A government-appointed committee monitors broadcasts. The Government owns the only television stations whose broadcasts may be received in most parts of the nation without decoders or satellite dish antennas.

Dish antennas permit free access to a wide variety of television foreign broadcasts and are available at moderate cost on the market. The antennas are in wide use throughout the country. Residents of the north are able to receive Spanish broadcasts with standard antennas. The Government did not impede the reception of foreign broadcasts during the year.

The Government generally does not restrict Internet access; however, the Government reportedly blocked JCO's Web sites.

From the mid-1980's, the popular humorist Ahmed Snoussi (also known as Bziz) was prohibited from performing in the country because of his satirizing those in power. The ban was lifted when the King invited him to appear in a public service advertisement for the Mohammed V Foundation.

The universities enjoy academic freedom in most areas, but are barred from open debate on the Monarchy, the Western Sahara, and Islam. Government informers monitor Islamist campus activities and rectors must be approved by the Ministry of Interior (see Section 1.f.).

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution provides for freedom of assembly; however, the law also permits the Government to suppress even peaceful demonstrations and mass gatherings, and at times police forcibly prevented and disrupted gatherings during the year. Most conferences and demonstrations require the prior authorization of the Ministry of Interior, ostensibly for security reasons. Local observers generally agree that the authorities require a declaration of a public meeting and authorization by the authorities in order for public-venue meetings to proceed, and the authorities only allow those meetings to proceed that they do not consider threatening.

Throughout the year, many meetings and marches took place peacefully without government interference, including sit-ins at the Ministry of Labor by unemployed university graduates; however, other demonstrations including those involving teachers, taxi drivers and unemployed graduates were prevented or disrupted by the Government.

The Government banned a meeting of Berbers in Fez in April, as well as the Berber national conference originally scheduled for June 22-24 (see Section 5).

On April 17, the police reportedly used excessive force to disperse taxi drivers in Rabat and Sale who were conducting a peaceful protest against what they saw as unjustified fines imposed by the police. The taxi union criticized the Government's action, in which 17 persons reportedly were injured (see Sections 1.c. and 6.a.).

On May 3, in the Western Sahara city of Laayoune, the CDT issued a statement claiming that security forces violently disrupted a sit-in by unemployed graduates outside the Employment Department headquarters (see Section 1.d.).

A group of handicapped, unemployed graduates near Rabat alleged that the authorities prevented them from participating in a May 1 Labor Day March.

In October the Party for Justice and Democracy, an Islamist-oriented political party, requested permission for a demonstration in downtown Rabat to protest military action in Afghanistan by the international counter-terrorism coalition. Permission was not granted.

According to press reports, on October 11, police used force to break up a sit-in by dock workers aboard a ship and arrested 60 union members.

On November 14, security forces using clubs broke up a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Finance in Rabat. According to press reports, some of the strikers were injured seriously (see Sections 1.c. and 6.a.).

On December 10 (Human Rights Day), 400 members of the AMDH staged a peaceful rally without incident, unlike last year. The demonstrators sent the Minister of Justice a list with 45 names of persons whom the AMDH claims were involved in past human rights abuses. On December 31, the AMDH, OMDH, and the FMVJ staged a peaceful New Years Eve sit-in demonstration in Casablanca to support those who have disappeared and been martyred.

One hundred protestors were sentenced early in the year in connection with demonstrations in late 2000 for holding an unauthorized demonstration. In December 2000, security forces used violent means to disperse demonstrations throughout Morocco involving thousands of protestors from the AMDH, JCO, and other organizations. Most of those arrested were released. The AMDH and the JCO claimed early in the year that 1,164 JCO demonstrators were detained and 950 injured during the incident. Between February 1 and March 1, 64 JCO members were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 3 months (suspended) to 1 year, plus fines. A total of 36 AMDH members, including their president, also received jail sentences (see Sections 1.d., 1.e., and 4). On November 21, the Rabat Court of Appeals overturned the conviction of the AMDH members. The Court found that the AMDH had requested permission for the event, but that the Ministry of the Interior had not denied it in writing, as required.

During the year, there were no new developments related to the investigation of police abuses committed in the Western Sahara city of Laayoune in September and October 1999. At that time, police used brutal force to break up demonstrations organized by students, unemployed graduates, miners, and former Sahrawi political prisoners, who were protesting a variety of social grievances. However, in November the King pardoned all those arrested during the September 1999 protests, and also pardoned Mohamed Daddach, whom the Polisario had portrayed as a political prisoner. Daddach had left the Polisario and voluntarily joined the military. He was prosecuted for attempted desertion, reportedly for attempting to return to the Polisario side. A total of 56 prisoners were released. There was progress during the year on local elections to choose members of the

proposed new Royal Advisory Council for the Western Sahara that the King announced in October 1999.

The Constitution provides for freedom of association; however, the Government limits this right in practice. Under a 1958 decree, which was amended substantially in 1973 to introduce restrictions on civil society organizations, persons who wish to create an organization must obtain the approval of the Ministry of Interior before holding meetings. In practice the Ministry uses this requirement to prevent persons suspected of advocating causes opposed by the Government from forming legal organizations. Historically, extreme Islamist and leftist groups have encountered the greatest difficulty in obtaining official approval. Although there are over 20 active Islamist groups, the Government has prohibited membership in two, the JCO and Jama'a Islamia, due to their perceived anti-Monarchy rhetoric. The Ministry of Interior, which has used this power to control participation in the political process, also must approve political parties. However, individual Islamists are not barred from participating in recognized political parties.

Several proposed parties were not allowed to form during the year. In April the Government banned the founding congress of the Liberal Party of former Human Rights Minister Mohammed Ziane. In June the Government prohibited the establishment of the Civic Forces party by Abderrahim Lahjouji, former head of an employers association. However, it held its constitutive assembly on November 10. More than 2,500 founding members attended, electing a national council, as well as electing Lahjouji as temporary chairman. The party planned to hold its first national congress in March 2002.

Throughout the year, journalists, NGO's, and human rights activists continued to call on the Government to enact a new public liberties law, which Prime Minister Youssoufi announced he would do when he assumed power in 1998 (see Section 2.a.). In 1999 42 NGO's addressed a memorandum to the Prime Minister proposing amendments to the law that governs the press, associations, and public gatherings. Their proposals were aimed at easing current restrictions and giving associations more freedom to organize and function. The present Public Liberties Law dates from 1958, and many legal observers agree that the sole amendment to the law, which was ratified in 1973, constituted a setback to civil liberties. The amendment apparently introduced restrictions that established firmer government control over the legal establishment of associations and the associations' scope of action once they are recognized legally and allowed to operate. A number of NGO's and activists expressed frustration at the Government's slow progress with respect to the reforms that they have called for on numerous occasions.

In October the Moroccan Bar Association also called for the promulgation of a new public liberties law.

c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion and Jewish and Christian communities openly practice their faiths; however, the Government places certain restrictions on Christian religious materials and proselytizing, and several small religious minorities are tolerated with varying degrees of official restrictions. A small foreign Hindu community has received the right to perform cremations and to hold services. Baha'is are forbidden to meet or participate in communal activities. The Government monitors the activities of mosques and places other restrictions on Muslims and Islamic organizations whose activities are deemed to have exceeded the bounds of religious practice and become political in nature. The Constitution provides that Islam is the official religion, and designates the King as "Commander of the Faithful" with the responsibility of ensuring "respect for Islam."

The Government does not license or approve religions or religious organizations. The Government provides tax benefits, land and building grants, subsidies, and customs exemptions for imports necessary for the observance of the major religions.

The Ministry of Islamic Affairs monitors Friday mosque sermons and the Koranic schools to ensure the teaching of approved doctrine. At times the authorities suppress the activities of Islamists, but generally tolerate activities limited to the propagation of Islam, education, and charity. Security forces sometimes close mosques to the public shortly after Friday services to prevent the use of the premises for unauthorized political activity. The Government strictly controls authorization to construct new mosques. Most mosques are constructed using private funds.

The Government bars the Islamic JCO as a political party and subjects prominent members to constant surveillance and at times prevented them from obtaining passports. The Government also arrested and prosecuted JCO members and blocked publication of JCO newspapers (see Sections 1.f., 2.a., 2.b., and 3).

The teaching of Islam in public schools benefits from discretionary funding in the Government's annual education budget, as do other curriculum subjects. The annual budget also provides funds for religious

instruction to the small parallel system of Jewish public schools.

Since the time of the French protectorate (1912-56), a small foreign Christian community has operated churches, orphanages, hospitals, and schools without any restriction or licensing requirement being imposed. Missionaries who conduct themselves in accordance with societal expectations largely are left unhindered. However, those who proselytize publicly face expulsion.

Islamic law and tradition call for strict punishment for any Muslim who converts to another faith. Citizens who convert to Christianity and other religions sometimes face social ostracism, and in the past a small number have faced short periods of questioning by the authorities. Voluntary conversion is not a crime under the Criminal or Civil Codes; however, the authorities have jailed some converts on the basis of references to Koranic law. Any attempt to induce a Muslim to convert is illegal. Foreign missionaries either limit their proselytizing to non-Muslims or conduct their work quietly.

In 2000 the Gendarmerie Royale summoned several members of the foreign Christian community for questioning concerning the practice of their faith. The Gendarmerie began an investigation into their activities at that time. The investigation reportedly still was ongoing at year's end. Despite not possessing resident visas, the subjects of the investigation continued to face no problems residing in, exiting, and returning to the country.

The Government permits the display and sale of Bibles in French, English, and Spanish, but confiscates Arabic-language Bibles and refuses licenses for their importation and sale, despite the absence of any law banning such books. Nevertheless, Arabic Bibles reportedly have been sold in local bookstores. There were no known cases in which foreigners were denied entry into the country because they were carrying Christian materials, as occurred in the past.

The small Baha'i community has been forbidden to meet or participate in communal activities since 1983; however, there were no reports during the year that the Government summoned members of the Baha'i Faith for questioning or denied them passports, as had occurred in previous years.

There are two sets of laws and courts—one for Jews and one for Muslims—pertaining to marriage, inheritance, and family matters. The family law courts are administered, depending on the law that applies, by rabbinical and Islamic authorities who are court officials. Parliament must authorize any changes to those laws. Non-Koranic sections of Islamic law on personal status are applied to non-Muslims and non-Jews.

The Government encourages tolerance and respect among religions. The King sponsored an inter-faith memorial ceremony on September 16 for the victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. Muslim, Christian and Jewish religious leaders presided. Prime Minister Youssoufi and numerous other ministers attended the ceremony, which was held in Rabat's Catholic cathedral.

The Government annually organizes in May the "Fez Festival of Sacred Music," which includes musicians from many countries representing many religions. The Government has organized in the past numerous symposiums among local and international clergy, priests, rabbis, imams and other spiritual leaders to examine ways to reduce religious intolerance and to promote interfaith dialogue. Each year during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, the King hosts colloquiums of Islamic religious scholars that include examination of ways to promote tolerance and mutual respect within Islam and between Islam and other religions.

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution provides for freedom of movement; however, the Government restricts this right in certain areas. The gendarmerie maintains checkpoints throughout the country, at which drivers' licenses and vehicle registrations are examined for validity. Although checkpoints have been maintained in the same places for years, the degree of inspections of motorists has relaxed, although the emphasis on inspecting trucks and buses continues due mainly to the country's status as a major transit point for illegal immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa and for drugs destined for Europe. While there were continuing allegations that gendarmes demand small bribes to clear vehicles, press reports indicate that gendarmes found guilty of such behavior are punished. In 1998 the Gendarmerie Royale began a campaign to combat such abuses within its ranks.

In the Moroccan-administered Western Sahara, authorities restrict movement in areas regarded as militarily sensitive.

The Ministry of Interior restricts freedom to travel outside the country in certain circumstances. In addition all civil servants and military personnel must obtain written permission from their ministries to leave the country. The OMDH and AMDH have compiled lists of individuals who reportedly have been denied passports or who

have passports but are denied permission to travel. The OMDH contended that the Government, in resorting to arbitrary administrative delays, continues to harass former political prisoners who seek to resume normal lives. The OMDH also has alleged that the Government forbids some citizens to leave the country during the year.

On January 17, after a public appeal to the King, Ahmed Marzouki was granted a passport and allowed to travel to Paris to publicize his book, "Tazmamart: Cellule 10," describing his 18 years as a prisoner in the notorious prison (see Sections 1.c and 2.a).

On March 24, two Sahwari human rights activists from the FMVJ's Western Sahara section claimed that they were not allowed to leave Casablanca to attend a meeting of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights. The activists claimed that the Government wanted to prevent them from testifying on arbitrary detention in Morocco before the Commission. However, they claimed that they faxed their testimony to the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), which presented it before the Commission.

According to press reports in 2000, three former political prisoners (two identified as Abdellah El-Harriif and Mostapha Brahma) requested passports in 2000. The three had not been given passports, nor had they been advised why their passport requests were refused, by year's end.

Moroccans may not renounce their citizenship, but the King retains the power--rarely used--to revoke it. Many Moroccans hold more than one citizenship and travel on passports from two or more countries. While in Morocco, they are regarded as Moroccan citizens. Dual nationals have sometimes complained in the past of harassment by immigration inspectors.

The Government welcomed voluntary repatriation of Jews who have emigrated. Moroccan Jewish emigres, including those with Israeli citizenship, freely visit the country. The Government also encouraged the return of Sahrawis who have departed Morocco due to the conflict in the Western Sahara, provided that they recognize the Government's claim to the region. The Government did not permit Western Saharan nationalists who have been released from prison to live in the disputed territory.

The Government cooperated with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees. While Morocco has from time to time provided political asylum to individuals, the issue of first asylum never has arisen. The law does not contain provisions implementing the 1951 U.N. Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. There were no reports of forced expulsion of persons with a valid claim to refugee status.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change their Government

Constitutional provisions establishing periodic free elections notwithstanding, citizens do not have the full right to change their government. The King, as head of state, appoints the Prime Minister, who is the titular head of government. Constitutional changes in 1992, retained in the Constitution of 1996, authorize the Prime Minister to nominate all government ministers, but the King may nominate ministers himself and has the power to replace any minister at will. The Parliament has the theoretical ability to effect change in the system of government. However, the Constitution may not be changed without the King's approval. The Ministry of Interior appoints the provincial governors (walis) and local caids (district administrative officials). However, the King may nominate walis himself. Municipal and regional councils are elected.

The Government of Prime Minister Abderrahmane Yousseoufi is the first government formed from the political opposition since the late 1950's, and his 1998 appointment by then-King Hassan II marked a significant step toward increased democratization. With the support of the Monarchy, Yousseoufi, who was sentenced to death in absentia in the 1970's but subsequently received a royal pardon in 1980, declared upon taking office his intention to modernize the administrative and judicial structures and to liberalize the economic and political system. Of the 41 cabinet-level posts in the Government that Yousseoufi appointed in 1998, only 3 posts (Foreign Affairs, Justice, and Islamic Affairs) plus the Secretary General of the Government and the Minister-Delegate for Defense Administration remain filled by incumbents from the former government. The Interior Minister has been replaced twice since then, and the current Minister, Driss Jettou, has a background in business and finances, rather than in security. In order to develop reforms, the King has granted cabinet ministers a greater degree of responsibility for the management of their individual portfolios. The Government now consists of 33 cabinet-level posts, but still contains 6 "sovereign" ministerial posts traditionally appointed by the King himself (Interior, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Islamic Affairs, Defense Administration, and Secretary General of the Government).

Following the June 1997 elections for municipal councils and regional professional councils, there were widespread and credible accusations of manipulation and vote-buying by various political parties and the

Government. The Election Commission examined numerous petitions during the course of the electoral season in 1997 and recommended the reversal of over 60 municipal election results, including in Tangier, Khoribga, and Oujda, noted irregularities in four parliamentary races in Casablanca, Chefchaouen, and Fez, and called for the results to be set aside, which they were.

In August 1997 at the urging of then-King Hassan II, Parliament created a 325-seat lower house, the Chamber of Representatives, to be filled by direct elections, and a 270-seat upper house, the Chamber of Deputies, whose members would be elected by various directly elected professional and regional councils. There were widespread, credible allegations of vote-buying and government manipulation in the November 1997 legislative elections. The fraud and government pressure tactics led most independent observers to conclude that the election results were heavily influenced, if not predetermined, by the Government. All opposition parties criticized the Government, and some called for a boycott of Parliament. Two winners renounced their seats, alleging unsolicited government interference on their behalf. The Election Commission concurred that irregularities had occurred in two Casablanca cases and recommended that new elections be held in those districts. After a long appeals process initiated by the losers of the seats, new elections for the seats were held on August 31 of last year, as well as elections for four other seats throughout the country. The new elections followed the formal invalidation of the six 1997 election results throughout the year by the Constitutional Council.

Press reports indicate that the August 2000 by-elections overall proceeded more fairly than in 1997, despite allegations that two of the races involved some cases of vote-buying. Also in August 2000, the Constitutional Council invalidated an additional by-election held in the Casablanca-Mechouar district in June that allegedly involved vote-buying. Despite the invalidations by the Constitutional Council in 2000, the Council continued to attract criticism for the alleged slow pace of its deliberations.

On September 15, 2000, indirect elections were held to replace, for the first time since the body's inception, one third of the 270 seats in the Chamber of Counselors. After the polls had closed, Interior Minister Midaoui reported in a nationally televised press conference that various political parties had engaged in vote-buying and fraud. Criticizing the electoral corruption, Minister Midaoui claimed that his ministry had done everything it could to prevent fraudulent practices, including conducting investigations into 108 cases, at least 26 of which the Interior Ministry was certain involved fraud. The Interior Minister also reported that the Ministry had turned the cases over to the Justice Ministry for further action, and that the Government "is going to do its duty." However, by year's end, few of the cases involving electoral fraud had been presented before the courts and prosecuted. According to press reports, the Constitutional Council also had received several hundred grievances relating to the election from throughout the country.

Fourteen parties have members in Parliament and 7 are represented in the governing coalition. Several proposed parties were not allowed to form during the year. The JCO never has been granted legal status as a political party (see Section 2.b.).

The percentage of women in government and politics does not correspond with their percentage of the population. There is 1 female minister in the 33-member Cabinet. There are 3 women among the 600 members of the 2 chambers of Parliament. Women occupy only 85 out of 22,600 seats (or .34 percent) of local communal councils throughout the country. However, there are a few women in several key positions, including the first Royal Advisor, the Head of the National Office of Oil Research and Exploration, and the head of the National Office of Tourism.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

There are three nationally organized and government-recognized nongovernmental human rights groups: The Moroccan Organization for Human Rights, the Moroccan League for the Defense of Human Rights (LMDDH), and the Moroccan Association for Human Rights. A fourth group, the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDDH), was formed in 1992 by former AMDH members. There are also numerous regional human rights organizations. The Government maintains close relations with all of these groups and generally is responsive to them. The AMDH does not officially work with the Government, due to philosophical differences, but usually shares information with it.

Founded in 1979 and 1988, respectively, the AMDH and OMDH have spent years addressing human rights abuses, and at times were subjected to harassment and restrictions by the Government. However, some of their former leaders now occupy high posts in the Yousoufi Government, particularly in the human rights field. In 2000 the Government accorded AMDH and OMDH "public utility" status, which confers organizations financial benefits such as government subsidies as recognition of their serving the public interest.

Two new prominent national human rights NGO's, the Moroccan Forum for Truth and Justice and the National Moroccan Prison Observatory (ONPM), were formed in 1999. Created by victims of forced disappearance and surviving family members, the FMVJ's principal goal is to encourage the Government to address openly the issue of past forced disappearances and arbitrary detention. It also lobbies for reparations for former political prisoners that extend beyond financial compensation. Created by lawyers, doctors, journalists, former inmates, and entertainment personalities, the ONPM's main purpose is improving the treatment and living conditions of prisoners. ONPM also supports penal reform efforts. In addition, there is the Moroccan Prison Observatory (OMP), an NGO formed in 2000, which also supports the improvement of prison conditions. These groups maintained fairly regular contact with government authorities throughout the year.

During the weekend of December 9 to 11, 2000, security forces throughout the country used violent means to disperse human rights activists, members of the JCO, and unemployed graduates who separately gathered in Rabat and other large cities to demonstrate for different reasons. Between February 1 and March 4, a total of 36 AMDH members including the organization's president, were among those sentenced to prison terms ranging from 3 months to 1 year, plus fines (see Sections 1.e. and 2.b.). On November 21, the Rabat Court of Appeals overturned the case against the 36 AMDH members.

In January the Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights Leagues held its world congress in Morocco. Many speakers openly and strongly criticized the Government's human rights record, including the December 2000 banning of three publications and arrest of AMDH activists and JCO protesters in December 2000.

In April Amnesty International Secretary General Pierre Sane visited Morocco. During the visit, Amnesty International upgraded its Moroccan affiliates from "chapter" to "section" status. Sane and his delegation met with the Prime Minister, as well as media and NGO's. Sane praised "the progress recorded by Morocco in the field of human rights and the methods by which the issue of detainees and exiles was dealt with." However, Sane urged the Government to improve its record regarding cases of political prisoners and the disappeared; he claimed that the Government held 60 political prisoners and that there still were 450 disappearances unaccounted for. Sane also urged the Government to investigate and prosecute those responsible for past crimes and abuses. The agreement between Amnesty International and the Government for a 10-year human rights education program still was being negotiated with the Ministry of Human Rights at year's end. The Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of Education are providing human rights education for teachers, although the subject is not being taught yet in the classrooms.

On November 7, the new Minister of the Interior, Driss Jettou, met with a delegation from the AMDH. He also met with representatives of several other human rights NGO's. Previous Interior Ministers had never met with human rights NGO's. On December 9, to mark Human Rights Day, the King gave an audience to several human rights activists.

The Center for Human Rights Documentation, Training, and Information is now operational; it was inaugurated in 2000 by the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson.

Prime Minister Yousoufi chairs a human rights commission that reviews cases of past and present human rights problems. The commission is composed of members of the Government, including the Ministers of Justice, Human Rights, and Interior.

The Royal Consultative Council on Human Rights, an 11-year-old advisory body to the King, counsels the Palace on human rights issues, and was the organization charged by the King to resolve cases related to persons who had disappeared. The CCDH is composed of five working groups responsible for promoting the protection of human rights. They include groups on penal law; prison conditions; communications with human rights NGO's; inhuman conditions of refugees in Polisario-controlled camps in Tindouf, Algeria; and economic, social, and cultural rights. By Royal Decree in July, the Government initiated several reforms regarding the organization and working of the CCDH, to make it more efficient and more independent of the ministries. The decree also directed the CCDH to submit its own annual report regarding the human rights situation in the country, and created an annual human rights prize. The decree enhanced autonomy by changing the composition of the council to decrease the number of seats for political parties and unions from 18 to 9, and increase the number for economic, social and cultural associations. In addition, the number of votes required for decision-making was lowered from a unanimous vote to a two-thirds majority. The decree also changed the status of ministerial delegates from voting to advisory members, thus reducing the influence of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice. Human rights organizations favored these changes and helped argue for them, although some groups believe the changes did not go far enough.

Throughout the year, the Human Rights Ministry held human rights awareness training sessions with educators and some police personnel. The sessions were directed at school inspectors at both the primary and

secondary school levels. Up to 75 additional training sessions are planned; the inspectors in turn are expected to transfer the training to teachers for integration into their teaching programs. Officials at the Human Rights Ministry state that some police officers and other enforcement officials also are being trained. The Government continued efforts to introduce human rights as a core subject of the national school curriculum.

Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The Constitution provides for the equality of all citizens; however, non-Muslims and women face discrimination in the law and in traditional practice.

Women

Spousal violence is common. Although a battered wife has the right to file a complaint with the police, as a practical matter she would do so only if prepared to bring criminal charges. While physical abuse legally is grounds for divorce, a court will grant a divorce only if the woman is able to provide two witnesses to the abuse. Medical certificates are not sufficient. If the court finds against the woman, she is returned to her husband's home. Thus, few women report abuses to the authorities.

The Criminal Code provides for severe punishment for men convicted of rape or sexual assault. The defendants in such cases bear the burden of proving their innocence. However, sexual assaults often go unreported because of the stigma attached to the loss of virginity. While not provided for by law, victims' families may offer rapists the opportunity to marry their victims in order to preserve the honor of the family. Spousal rape is not a crime.

The law is more lenient toward men with respect to crimes committed against their wives; for example, a light sentence may be accorded a man who murders his wife after catching her in the act of adultery. However, such "honor crimes," a euphemism that refers to violent assaults with intent to commit murder against a female for her perceived immodest or defiant behavior, remain extremely rare in Morocco.

Prostitution is prevalent, especially in urban centers. There are thousands of teenagers involved in prostitution. Although prostitution itself is against the law, the Government does not prosecute women who have been coerced into providing sexual services. Trafficking in persons, particularly in child maids, is a problem (see Section 6).

Women are subjected to various forms of legal and cultural discrimination. The civil law status of women is governed by the Code of Personal Status (known as the "Moudouwana"), which is based on the Malikite school of Islamic law. Although the Code of Personal Status was reformed in 1993, women's groups still complain of unequal treatment, particularly under the laws governing marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Women do not automatically lose child custody in divorce cases. However, the courts generally rule in favor of the parent who did not file for the divorce. Citizenship passes through the father. In order to marry, a woman generally is required to obtain the permission of her legal guardian, usually her father. It is much easier for a man to divorce his wife than for a woman to divorce her husband. Under Islamic law and tradition, rather than asking for a divorce, a man simply may repudiate his wife outside of court. Under the 1993 reforms to the Code of Personal Status, a woman's presence in court is required in order for her husband to divorce her, although women's groups report that this law frequently is ignored. However, human rights activists reported that in one NGO-sponsored test in the late 1990's, officials refused to order a divorce without the wife being present, despite offers of bribes. Nevertheless, women's groups complain that men resort to ruses to evade the legal restrictions. The divorce may be finalized even over the woman's objections, although in such cases the court grants her unspecified allowance rights.

A woman seeking a divorce has few practical alternatives. She may offer her husband money to agree to a divorce (known as a *khol'a* divorce under Islamic law). The husband must agree to the divorce and is allowed to specify the amount to be paid, without limit. According to women's groups, many men pressure their wives to pursue this type of divorce. A woman also may file for a judicial divorce if her husband takes a second wife, if he abandons her, or if he physically abuses her. However, divorce procedures in these cases are lengthy and complicated.

Under the Criminal Code, women generally are accorded the same treatment as men, but this is not the case for family and estate law, which is based on the Code of Personal Status. Under the Code of Personal Status, women inherit only half as much as male heirs. Moreover, even in cases in which the law provides for equal status, cultural norms often prevent a woman from exercising those rights. For example, when a woman inherits property, male relatives may pressure her to relinquish her interest.

While many well-educated women pursue careers in law, medicine, education, and government service, few make it to the top echelons of their professions. Women constitute approximately 35 percent of the work force, with the majority in the industrial, service, and teaching sectors. In 1998 (the last official statistics available) the Government reported that the illiteracy rate for women was 67 percent (83 percent in rural areas), compared with 41 percent for men (50 percent in rural areas). Women in rural areas are most affected by inequality. Rural women perform difficult physical labor. Girls are much less likely to be sent to school than are boys, especially in rural areas, where the quality of schooling is inferior to urban areas and demands on girls' time for household chores often prevent school attendance. Some families also keep girls at home because of the lack of facilities in rural schools. Improving and extending the network of rural schools to increase girls' school attendance has been a priority of the Youssoufi government. The 4.8 percent increase in primary school attendance this school year is attributable largely to the increased numbers of girls attending school. Women who earn secondary school diplomas have equal access to university education.

The Government and the King continued to promote their proposal to reform the Personal Status Code (Moudawana) in order to advance women's rights. Islamists and some other traditional segments of society firmly opposed the proposal, especially with respect to its more controversial elements, such as reform of women's legal status in marriage and family law issues.

On March 8, the King, Prime Minister, and several other ministers met with 40 representatives of women's organizations at the Royal Palace. In April the King created a Consultative Commission for the Moudawana. However, in September, the ADFM and nine other organizations, collectively named the Spring of Equality, issued a communique concerning the Moudawana. The communique expressed disappointment that changes to the Personal Status Code had not yet been approved, offered specific recommendations for such changes, and urged the Consultative Commission to expedite its work. On October 17, the AMDH issued a statement in support of these demands, but refused to present its case before the Consultative Commission. The Commission had not announced publicly any actions taken regarding reform of the Moudawana by year's end.

On May 7, in the newspaper Liberation, the Democratic League for Women's Rights criticized some imams for attacking female poet Hakima Chaoui in their sermons, and for harming Islam in general by giving less importance to women.

The European Union and the Government created a national center dealing with women's issues, which works with the Ministry in Charge of the Condition of Women, Protection of the Family, and Children, and Integration of the Handicapped.

The Moroccan Bar Association and the Government have opened 15 support centers to assist victims of violence.

On November 8, one feminist columnist, Nouzha Skalli, called for a quota system. She noted that only 3 of 600 members of Parliament were female, and only 85 of 22,600 municipal councilors. In her article, published after the Green March holiday, she noted that she was 1 of 35,000 females who actually took place in the Green March in 1975, when 10 percent of the 350,000 positions were reserved for women under a quota system in place for the event.

A total of 76 NGO's work to advance women's rights and to promote women's issues. Among these are the Democratic Association of Moroccan Women, the Union for Women's Action, and the Moroccan Association for Women's Rights, which advocate enhanced political and civil rights, as well as numerous NGO's that provide shelters for battered women, teach women basic hygiene, family planning, and child care, and promote literacy.

Women's groups also are concerned about the September 2002 elections. On October 13 in Casablanca, the Spring of Equality and other organizations held a conference regarding the role of women in the elections. The stated goal was increased numbers of women who vote and who run for office through a two-phase training process. The British Government helped subsidize an NGO pamphlet that urged rural women to exercise their right to vote.

Children

The law provides for compulsory education for children between the ages of 7 and 13; however, not all children between these ages attend school due to family decisions and shortfalls in government resources, and the Government does not enforce the law. According to government statistics, the percentage of children attending primary school increased by 4.8 percent in the 2000-01 school year; the Government has set a goal of having all children in school by 2006.

The Government has had difficulty addressing the problem of child labor (see Section 6.d.). Young girls are exploited as domestic servants on a very large scale (see Section 6.f.). Teenage prostitution in urban centers has been estimated in the thousands by NGO activists. The clientele consists of both foreign tourists and citizens. More young girls than boys are involved; however, young boys also work as prostitutes.

The practice of adoptive servitude, in which urban families employ young rural girls and use them as domestic servants in their homes, is prevalent (see Sections 6.d. and 6.f.). Credible reports of physical and psychological abuse in such circumstances are widespread. Some orphanages have been charged as knowing accomplices in the practice. More often parents of rural girls "contract" their daughters to wealthy urban families and collect the salaries for their work as maids. Adoptive servitude is accepted socially, is unregulated by the Government, and has only in recent years begun to attract public criticism. However, at the end of 2000, the Moroccan UNICEF chapter and the National Observatory of Children's Rights (ONDE), headed by Princess Lalla Meryem, the King's sister, began a human rights awareness campaign regarding the plight of child maids. The ONDE continued to publish public service advertisements in leading publications. In addition, UNICEF and other donors in 2000 funded a pilot project in Casablanca, working through Moroccan NGO's, to aid young girls by providing basic education, health care, and recreational opportunities for child maids at five drop-in centers.

The Government has had difficulty addressing the problem of child labor (see Section 6.d.). The number of children working illegally as domestic servants is high: 45.4 percent of household employees under the age of 18 are between the ages of 10 and 12, and 26.4 percent are under the age of 10, according to an April joint study by the Moroccan League for the Protection of Children and UNICEF. The legal minimum age of employment is 15 years. The report denounced the poor treatment a number of the children received, such as being forced to work all day with no breaks. The League demanded that the minimum age for employment be raised and that the Labor Code under consideration strengthen the protection of child workers.

Another problem facing abandoned children of both sexes is their lack of civil status. Civil status is necessary to obtain a birth certificate, passport, or marriage license. In general men are registered at local government offices; their wives and unmarried children are included in this registration, which confers civil status. If a father does not register his child, the child is without civil status and the benefits of citizenship. It is possible for an individual to self-register, but the process is long and cumbersome. While any child, regardless of parentage, may be registered within a month of birth, a court order is required if registration does not take place in that time. Abandoned children in some cases receive kafala (state-sponsored care).

Several NGO's, including the Bayti Association and the Moroccan League for the Protection of Children, work to improve legal protection for children and to help at-risk children. There are several shelters in the major cities that provide food and lodging for street children, while other NGO's work to reduce the exploitation of street children and to cure those street children with drug addictions.

During the week of April 16, Princess Lalla Meryem hosted the first Summit of African First Ladies on Childhood in Marrakech. The members adopted the "Marrakech Declaration," pledging to "promote, protect, and consecrate girls in Africa." On October 31, Princess Lalla Hasna presided at the official opening of the SOS Children's Village south of Casablanca, the third one to open in Morocco.

Persons with Disabilities

A high incidence of disabling disease, especially polio, has resulted in a correspondingly high number of persons with disabilities. The latest statistics from the Government estimate the number of persons with disabilities at 2.2 million, or 7 percent of the population. However, other estimates are as high as 3 million. While the Ministry of Social Affairs attempts to integrate persons with disabilities into society, in practice integration largely is left to private charities. The annual budget for the ministerial department in charge of affairs concerning persons with disabilities is only .01 percent of the overall annual budget. Even nonprofit special-education programs are priced beyond the reach of most families. Typically, their families support persons with disabilities; some survive by begging. There are no laws assisting persons with disabilities in housing, transportation, access to government services, or access to buildings.

The Government continued a pilot training program for the visually impaired sponsored in part by a member of the royal family. In 2000, the Government created a special commission for the integration of persons with disabilities, presided over by Prime Minister Youssef. The commission is responsible for developing programs that facilitate their societal integration. Also in 2000, the Government instituted an annual "National Day of the Disabled," which is aimed at increasing public awareness of issues affecting persons with disabilities. The King's charity, the Mohammed V Solidarity Fund, makes several donations each year to institutions supporting persons with disabilities.

On October 31, Member of Parliament and President of the Moroccan Association of SOS Children's Villages, Amine Demnati, announced that construction had begun south of Casablanca for a center for persons with disabilities adjacent to the Children's Village.

On November 16, after the fourth annual "handisports" games for athletes with disabilities, the King hosted a reception in their honor at the royal palace in Rabat to increase awareness and acceptance of persons with disabilities.

On December 5, the International Day of Handicapped Persons, the Ministry for the Condition of Women, Protection of the Family and Children, and Integration of the Handicapped, sponsored a 2-day workshop with NGO's to promote self-employment of the handicapped. The program included micro-financing for persons with disabilities.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

The official language is Arabic. Both French and Arabic are used in the news media and educational institutions. Science and technical courses are taught in French, thereby preventing the large, monolingual-Arabic-speaking population from participation in such programs. Educational reforms in the past decade have emphasized the use of Arabic in secondary schools. However, failure to transform the university system similarly has led to the disqualification of many students from higher education in lucrative fields. This especially is true among the poor, for whom training in French to supplement the few hours a week that it is taught in public schools is not always affordable.

About 60 percent of the population claim Berber heritage, including the Royal Family. Berber cultural groups contend that Berber traditions and the Berber language (actually three dialects, Tamazight, Tachelhit and Tarifit) are being lost rapidly. A number of Berber associations claimed that the Government refuses to register births for children with traditional Berber names, discourages the public display of the Berber language, limits the activities of Berber associations, and continues to Arabize the names of towns, villages, and geographic landmarks. Nevertheless, a full page of a major national newspaper is devoted on a monthly basis to articles and poems on Berber culture, which are printed in the Berber language, although with Latin script. Official media broadcast in the Berber language for limited periods each day.

On October 17, the King issued a royal decree creating the Royal Institute for Amazigh (Berber) Culture (IRCAM), as he had promised to do in his July 30 Throne Day speech. According to the decree, the IRCAM was to receive funding from the Ministry of Finance to work in the areas of education, the media, culture, and local government administration. At year's end, funding had not been made available. The King said that the Berber culture was the property of all Moroccans, and warned against anyone trying to use it for political purposes. Press reports indicated that the rector of IRCAM would be Mohamed Chafik, the drafter of the Berber Manifesto.

On April 14, authorities in Fez banned a meeting scheduled to commemorate the anniversary of the cultural and political "Berber Manifesto." The Government also banned the Berber national conference scheduled for June 22 to 24, although it ultimately allowed the conference to be held in Rabat on November 9 to 11. The activists called on the Government to recognize and teach Berber languages; to provide more information about their culture in the press; and to end restrictions on registering Berber names for children. The conference plans a bigger meeting in late December. Attendees disagreed over the establishment and the composition of IRCAM.

Section 6 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

Workers are free to establish and join trade unions, although the laws reportedly have not been implemented in some areas, and the unions themselves are not completely free from government interference. About half a million of the country's 9 million workers are unionized in 17 trade union federations. Three federations dominate the labor scene: The Union Marocaine du Travail (UMT), the Confederation Democratique du Travail (CDT), and the Union Generale des Travailleurs Marocains (UGTM). The UMT has no political party affiliation. The CDT is affiliated with the ruling Socialist Union of Popular Forces of Prime Minister Youssoufi and the UGTM with the Istiqlal party, the second partner in the ruling coalition. It is widely believed that the Ministry of Interior has informants within the unions who monitor union activities and the election of officers. Sometimes union officers are subject to government pressure. Union leadership does not always uphold the rights of members to select their own leaders. There has been no case of the rank and file voting out its current leadership and replacing it with another.

Workers have a right to strike and do so; however, the law requires compulsory arbitration of disputes. Work stoppages normally are intended to advertise grievances and last 24 to 72 hours or less. Unions organized 267 work stoppages during the year resulting in 338,000 lost workdays, according to Labor Ministry statistics.

The Government in a number of instances used security forces to break up demonstrating strikers, at times using excessive force in doing so (see Section 2.b.). Article 288 of the Penal Code, which the UMT wants repealed, permits employers to initiate criminal prosecutions of workers for stopping work if they strike. The Government has the authority to break up demonstrations in public areas that do not have government authorization, or to prevent the unauthorized occupancy of private space such as a factory.

According to press reports (see Section 2.b.), on October 11, police used force to break up a sit-in on board a ship by dock workers, and arrested 60 union members.

On November 14, security forces using clubs broke up an attempted sit-in by striking teachers in front of the Ministry of Finances in Rabat. According to press reports, some of the strikers were injured seriously (see Section 2.b.).

In November 2000, security forces reportedly used violent means to break up a 5-day sit-in strike at a canning factory in the southern city of Agadir. The attack reportedly resulted in the death of one worker and injuries to eight others. Conflicting reports attributed the death to either police abuse or "natural causes." No charges were filed in connection with the death.

According to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, in November 2000, the management of a multinational textile factory in Sale responded to their employees' election of 8 members of a trade union committee by firing all 8 elected workers and posting a large banner at the factory entrance that read "NO UNION." The eight trade union leaders subsequently were harassed and assaulted by company security personnel. They were detained briefly at a police station. The Governor of Sale reportedly responded to the situation by commenting publicly, "I do not recognize nor want a trade union in my Prefecture." The eight workers later were allowed to return to their jobs, but it is not known if they were allowed to establish a union.

In August 2000, during labor unrest near Casablanca, the nephew of a private transportation company owner drove a bus into a crowd of striking workers, killing 3 persons and injuring 12, in an attempt to end the occupation and obstruction of the company's bus depot. The workers were demonstrating to have their salaries increased to the level of the new national minimum wage and to compel the company to make its contributions to the national social security administration, as required by law. Government security forces arrested the nephew and son of the owner, the owner himself, and local thugs the company allegedly hired to intimidate the strikers. The owner's daughter also was charged in the case. There were no further developments in the ongoing investigation by year's end.

During a February 2000 operation in the village of Tarmilet (48 miles from the capital), security forces used force, including rubber bullets, tear gas, and water cannons, to remove striking workers who had blockaded a water bottling factory for almost 3 months to protest layoffs of temporary workers. Dozens of strikers and members of the security forces were injured during the operation. Security forces also reportedly arrested worker sympathizers who were on-site, in addition to more than a dozen factory workers. An investigation into the incident remained open at year's end.

No charges were filed based on the accusations of trucker and regional UGTM bureau member Sadok El-Kihal. El-Kihal was arrested and jailed on charges of forming a criminal gang and setting a vehicle on fire during a national trucker's strike in June 1999. He contacted the AMDH after his May 2000 royal pardon release with accusations that he had been arrested, jailed, tortured, and falsely convicted by authorities (see Section 1.c.).

Unions may sue to have labor laws enforced, and employers may sue unions when they believe that unions have overstepped their authority.

Unions belong to regional labor organizations and maintain ties with international trade union secretariats. The UMT is a member of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The right to organize and bargain collectively is implied in the constitutional provisions on the right to strike and the right to join organizations; however, the laws governing collective bargaining are inadequate. Trade union federations compete among themselves to organize workers. Any group of eight workers may organize a union

and a worker may change union affiliation easily. A work site may contain several independent locals or locals affiliated with more than one labor federation.

Collective bargaining has been a longstanding tradition in some parts of the economy, such as the industrial sector, and is becoming more prevalent in the service sector, including banking, health and the civil service. The wages and conditions of employment of unionized workers generally are set in discussions between employer and worker representatives. However, wages for the vast majority of workers are set unilaterally by employers. Labor disputes have arisen in some cases as the result of employers failing to implement collective bargaining agreements. The most serious example was the Government's failure to implement an agreement negotiated with the three major teachers' unions in December 2000. Following the Government's failure to include any needed adjustments in its 2002 budget, the major teachers' unions went on strike for 3 days in November.

Employers wishing to dismiss workers are required by law to notify the provincial governor through the labor inspector's office. In cases in which employers plan to replace dismissed workers, a government labor inspector provides replacements and mediates the cases of workers who protest their dismissal. Any worker who is dismissed for committing a serious infraction of work rules is entitled by law to a court hearing.

In general the Government ensures the observance of labor laws in larger companies and in the public sector. In the informal economy, such as in the family workshops-dominated handicrafts sector, employers routinely ignore labor laws and regulations, and government inspectors lack the resources to monitor violations effectively.

There is no law specifically prohibiting antiunion discrimination. Under the ostensible justification of "separation for cause," employers have dismissed workers for union activities that are regarded as threatening to employer interests. The courts have the authority to reinstate such workers, but are unable to enforce rulings that compel employers to pay damages and back pay. Ministry of Labor inspectors serve as investigators and conciliators in labor disputes, but they are few in number and do not have the resources to investigate all cases. Unions have resorted increasingly to litigation to resolve labor disputes.

Labor law reform is such a controversial issue that a draft revised Labor Code has remained under discussion among the social partners and in parliamentary committee for more than 20 years. According to employer groups, the law makes it extremely difficult to fire or lay off permanent employees. The standard for legally firing a permanent employee is "serious error" committed by the employee, and the courts set the burden of proof very high. Reductions in force due to economic hardship also become mired in politics and are extremely hard to implement.

Labor law applies equally to the small Tangier export zone. The proportion of unionized workers in the export zone is about the same as in the rest of the economy, roughly 5 percent.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

Forced or compulsory labor is prohibited by royal decree, and when authorities become aware of instances of forced labor, courts enforce the decree; however, in practice the Government lacks the resources to inspect all places of employment to ensure that forced labor is not being used, and forced labor persists in the practice of adoptive servitude.

The Government prohibits forced and bonded labor by children, but does not enforce this prohibition effectively. The practice of adoptive servitude, in which families employ young girls and use them as domestic servants, is socially accepted, and the Government does not regulate it. Credible reports of physical and psychological abuse in such cases are widespread (see Sections 5 and 6.f.). Women and children being forced into prostitution is a problem, especially in cities with large numbers of tourists (see Section 6.f.).

d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

The minimum employment age was raised from 12 to 15, to be effective January 6, 2002. The minimum age applies to all sectors and includes apprenticed children and those in family businesses. Various laws provide protective measures for children under 16 at work. The law prohibits children under 16 from being employed more than 10 hours per day, including a minimum of a 1-hour break. All employees are limited to a maximum 48-hour regularly scheduled workweek.

Abuse of child labor laws is common, particularly in the informal sector. In practice children often are apprenticed before age 12, particularly in the informal handicraft industry. The use of minors is common in the

small family-run workshops that produce rugs, ceramics, woodwork, and leather goods. Children, particularly rural girls, also are employed informally as domestic servants and usually receive little or no payment. Safety and health conditions, as well as wages in businesses that employ children, often are substandard. The law prohibits forced or bonded labor by children; however, the Government does not enforce the law effectively (see Section 6.c.). The practice of adoptive servitude often is characterized by physical and psychological abuse (see Sections 5, 6.c., and 6.f.). There are thousands of teenage prostitutes in urban centers (see Section 6.f.). The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and with the support of UNICEF, is pursuing a strategy to ensure basic education and health services for child workers.

Ministry of Labor inspectors are responsible for enforcing child labor regulations, which generally are well observed in the industrialized, unionized sector of the economy. However, the inspectors are not authorized to monitor the conditions of domestic servants. The Government maintains that the informal handicrafts sector is difficult to monitor.

The Government lacks the resources to enforce laws against child labor, and there is general acceptance of the presumption that, to properly learn traditional handicraft skills, it is necessary for children to start working at a young age. In addition many citizens claim that having children working to learn a craft is better than having them live on the streets, where they might turn to juvenile delinquency, prostitution, or substance abuse.

The Ministry of Planning and Economic Forecasting, with funding from UNICEF and through collaboration with domestic NGO's, conducted a survey from April to June 2000 of domestic employees in Casablanca. The study concluded that there are approximately 13,000 girls under age 15 employed as child maids in Casablanca. Another study estimated that 20,000 child maids are working in Morocco's other major cities. According to the survey, over 80 percent of the child maids are illiterate and over 80 percent are from rural areas. Their pay ranges from \$20 to \$50 a month (220 to 550 dirhams) plus room and board; however, in about half the cases, the girl's pay is given to a family member or not provided at all. The girls report working from early morning to late night, often without a break, under conditions of physical or psychological abuse. Four percent report having been sexually abused by a member of the employer's household. UNICEF and several domestic NGO's are working, with government support, to begin to provide the child maids with education and health care, as well as the opportunity to return to their families or to leave their employers and be trained for other jobs. The Moroccan League for the Protection of Children demanded that the minimum age for employment be raised and that the Labor Code be revised to strengthen the protection of child workers.

In September 2000, authorities in Fez announced plans to open four centers for the protection of children handicraft workers. Cosponsored by UNICEF, the centers are to provide children's rights education to child workers, their families, and employers. The centers are to take in street children and provide them with handicraft training and recreational opportunities. Health services for children also are planned for each center. One center opened in September 2000, and four more opened during the year.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

In July 2000, the Government increased the minimum wage by 10 percent to approximately \$162 (1,800 dirhams) per month in the industrialized sector and to approximately \$8.10 (90 dirhams) per day for agricultural workers; however, businesses in the extensive informal sector often ignore the minimum wage requirements. Neither the minimum wage for the industrialized sector nor the wage for agricultural workers provides a decent standard of living for a worker and family, even with government subsidies for food, diesel fuel, and public transportation. Unions continue to appeal unsuccessfully for a minimum wage of approximately \$180 (2,000 dirhams) per month. In many cases, several family members combine their income to support the family. Most workers in the industrial sector earn more than the minimum wage. They generally are paid between 13 and 16 months' salary, including bonuses, each year.

The minimum wage is not enforced effectively in the informal and handicraft sectors. However, the Government no longer pays less than the minimum wage to workers at the lowest civil service grades. To increase employment opportunities for recent graduates, the Government allows firms to hire for a limited period through a subsidized internship program at less than the minimum wage.

The law provides for a 48-hour maximum workweek, with no more than 10 hours worked in any single day, premium pay for overtime, paid public and annual holidays, and minimum conditions for health and safety, including a prohibition on night work for women and minors. As with other labor regulations and laws, these are not observed universally and are not enforced effectively by the Government in all sectors.

Occupational health and safety standards are rudimentary, except for a prohibition on the employment of women in certain dangerous occupations. Labor inspectors attempt to monitor working conditions and investigate accidents, but lack sufficient resources. While workers in principle have the right to remove

themselves from work situations that endanger health and safety without jeopardizing their continued employment, there were no reports of workers attempting to exercise this right.

f. Trafficking in Persons

The law does not specifically prohibit trafficking in persons; under the Penal Code perpetrators are prosecuted either as scam artists, corruptors of minors, or persons who force others into prostitution. Trafficking in persons is a problem.

Prostitution is prevalent, particularly in cities with large numbers of tourists, as well as near towns with large military installations (see Section 5). NGO activists estimate that there are thousands of teenage prostitutes in urban centers. There were reports that women and girls were forced into prostitution. On February 8, L'Opinion reported that 26 persons had been arrested for involvement in trafficking in minors. The persons arrested allegedly worked for a network that reportedly operated in Sale, Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech, Tangier, Tetouan, and Agadir on a large scale. The preferred targets were girls aged under 14. According to the weekly newsmagazine Maroc Hebdo International, as of October 26, 155 persons had been prosecuted for the sexual exploitation of children. Of those, 128 were in prison. Their victims included 101 boys and 66 girls.

Moroccans also are trafficked abroad. Traffickers approach their victims by offering them money. In those cases where unwitting Moroccan women have been recruited to perform sexual services outside of the country, traffickers usually have deceived them into thinking that they will be filling secretarial or domestic servant jobs. In November the press reported the uncovering of a trafficking network in which young Moroccan women paid \$2,000 in return for fictional hotel work contracts and travel to Amman, Jordan, where they were forced into prostitution. This was similar to a scam reported in 1999 between Morocco and the Persian Gulf states. In October the press also reported the arrest of nine persons in Casablanca running a secret emigration network offering fraudulent work contracts and transport to Europe in return for payments of about \$4,000.

Internal trafficking is a problem, particularly of women for sexual exploitation or of young girls for domestic service. The practice of adoptive servitude, in which families employ young girls and use them as indentured servants, is a large scale problem that is accepted socially, and the Government does not regulate it (see Section 5). The Planning Ministry, in a 2001 study funded by UNICEF, concluded that some 13,000 girls under 15 are working as child maids in Casablanca alone (See Section 6d). Reports of physical and psychological abuse in such cases are widespread; four percent of the girls report sexual abuse by members of the employer's household. Some orphanages have been charged as knowing accomplices in providing these young child maids; however, more often, parents of rural girls "contract" their daughters as maids to wealthier urban families and collect their salaries (see Sections 5 and 6.d.)

The country is also a transit point for trafficking and alien smuggling. From January 1 to June 30, the Spanish Government arrested approximately 35,000 persons attempting to enter Europe illegally from Morocco, of whom 15,000 were from other African countries or Asia. Those potential victims of trafficking who were detained, jailed, or deported usually were third country nationals transiting the country en route to Europe.

In October, the Government hosted the Arab-African Forum against Sexual Exploitation of Children, under UNICEF auspices. The conference included frank discussion of a subject that is commonly taboo. The Government requested that the participants present their results at the World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children in Japan in December.

A national campaign against the employment of child maids and promoting schooling for all children was launched in October 2000 and continued throughout 2001. The campaign was organized by a domestic NGO with support from the Government, as well as UNICEF and other donors. The National Observatory for Child Welfare provided legal counsel to victims of abuse. Responses to cases of child maid abuse vary depending on the situation. The shared government and NGO goal is to return them to their families if possible; if not, they may be placed in a women's or girls' shelter.

Several domestic NGO's, as well as a branch of Terre Des Hommes, a Swiss-based international NGO, help victims of trafficking by assisting and rehabilitating street children, educating delinquents and runaways, assisting single mothers to become financially independent, educating youths and prostitutes about the dangers of unprotected sex, and advocating in favor of women's rights.